

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard.

This clear violation of the community interests needs more than a simple slap on the wrist after the fact. The programming they intend to broadcast would do clear damage to the democratic process by presenting clearly prejudicial ideas in an obvious attempt to smear one candidate. Even broadcasting material from the other side will do little to counter this smear effort--and what would it say to principles to have the other side lower itself to the same standards?

This broadcast should be stopped--by FCC order, or by court injunction if necessary--to compel Sinclair to honor its obligations to their local communities, to maintain standards of ethics in broadcasting, and to protect the democratic process.

Thank you.